

CLAIMS

1. A method of selectively deleting messages contained within folders in a database on a client device, the folders being arranged in a true hierarchical structure, the method comprising:
 - marking folders containing messages to be retained with a first flag;
 - marking folders having messages to be deleted with a second flag; and
 - deleting messages contained within the folders having the second flag marked and the first flag unmarked.
2. The method according to claim 1, wherein marking folders containing messages to be retained comprises:
 - marking by the client device folders containing messages to be retained with the first flag.
3. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
 - before marking folders having messages to be deleted, placing messages into folders, the messages being contained within individual folders.
4. The method according to claim 3, wherein marking folders having messages to be deleted, comprises:
 - marking folders having messages to be deleted with a second flag in response to placing messages into the folders.
5. The method according to claim 4, wherein placing messages into folders comprises downloading messages from a server to folders on the client device.
6. The method according to claim 4, further comprising:

before downloading messages from the server, connecting the client device to the server.

7. The method according to claim 4, wherein placing messages into folders comprises copying or moving messages from one folder to another folder.
8. The method according to claim 1, wherein deleting messages comprises:
deleting messages in response to disconnecting the client device from a server.
9. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
after deleting messages, removing the second flag from the folders to unmark the folders.
10. The method according to claim 1, wherein marking folders having messages to be deleted, comprises:
marking folders having messages to be deleted with a second flag after connecting the client device to a server.
11. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
after deleting the messages, getting a list of a folder's sub-folders to recursively parse all the folders in the hierarchy.

12. A computer program storage medium readable by a computing system and encoding a computer program of instructions for executing a computer process for selectively deleting messages contained within folders in a database on a client device, the folders being arranged in true hierarchical structure, the computer process comprising:

indicating folders containing messages to be retained with an off-line flag;
indicating folders including messages to be deleted with a cleanup flag; and
deleting messages contained within the folders having the cleanup flag marked and the off-line flag unmarked.

13. The computer storage medium of claim 12 wherein the computer process further comprises:

before marking folders having messages to be deleted, placing messages into folders, the messages being contained within individual folders.

14. The computer storage medium of claim 13 wherein marking folders having messages to be deleted, comprises:

marking folders having messages to be deleted with a cleanup flag in response to placing messages into the folders.

15. The computer storage medium of claim 14 wherein placing messages into folders comprises:

downloading messages from a server to folders on the client device.

16. The computer storage medium of claim 14 wherein placing messages into folders comprises copying or moving messages from one folder to another folder.

17. The computer storage medium of claim 12 wherein deleting messages comprises:

deleting messages in response to disconnecting the client device from the server.

18. The computer storage medium of claim 12 wherein the computer process further comprises:

after deleting messages, removing the cleanup flag from the folders to unmark the folders.

19. The computer storage medium of claim 12 wherein the computer process further comprises:

after deleting messages, getting a list of a folder's sub-folders to recursively parse all the folders in the hierarchy.

20. An apparatus for selectively deleting messages contained within folders in a database on a client device, the folders being arranged in a true hierarchical structure, the apparatus comprising:

an off-line module marking folders containing messages to be retained for off-line use;

a set module marking folders having messages to be deleted with a cleanup flag; and

an erase module deleting messages contained within the folders having the cleanup flag marked and the off-line flag unmarked.

21. An apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the off-line module is under user control.

22. An apparatus according to claim 20, further comprising:

a move module placing messages into folders, the messages being contained within individual folders.

23. An apparatus according to claim 22, wherein the move module downloads messages from a server to the client device and moves or copies messages from one folder to another folder.

24. An apparatus according to claim 20, further comprising:

a connection module connecting the client device to a server.

25. An apparatus according to claim 20, further comprising:

a disconnection module disconnecting the client device from a server.

26. An apparatus according to claim 20, further comprising:
- a get-list module getting a list of a folder's sub-folders to recursively parse all the folders in the hierarchy.

27. A computer data signal embodied in a carrier wave readable by a computing system and encoding a computer program of instructions for executing a computer process for selectively deleting messages contained within folders in a database on a client device, the folders being arranged in a true hierarchical structure, the computer process comprising:

indicating folders in the hierarchy containing messages to be retained with an off-line flag;

indicating folders in the hierarchy having messages to be deleted with a cleanup flag; and

deleting messages contained within the folders in the hierarchy having the cleanup flag marked and the off-line flag unmarked.

28. The computer data signal of claim 27 wherein the computer process further comprises:

before marking folders having messages to be deleted, placing messages into folders, the messages being contained within individual folders.

29. The computer data signal of claim 28 wherein marking folders having messages to be deleted, comprises:

marking folders having messages to be deleted with a cleanup flag in response to placing messages into the folders.

30. The computer data signal of claim 29 wherein placing messages into folders comprises:

downloading messages from a server to folders on the client device.

